



October 20, 2009

Welcome to my weekly email update - a brief summary of some of the more notable events from Washington, DC and the U.S. Senate during the last seven days. I hope you'll find this useful and informative.

My First Floor Speech

Later this week, I hope to deliver my first speech on the floor of the United States Senate. Typically, new senators wait a period of time before taking to the floor but given the monumental issues our nation is facing, I feel compelled to speak on behalf of Floridians sooner rather than later. I will send a notice when the timing of this speech becomes finalized. You can view Senate proceedings on C-Span 2 or on the Internet at <http://c-span.org>.

LeMieux Urges Action on Historic High-Speed Rail Opportunity

Monday, I met with fellow Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Florida Senate President Jeff Atwater, Democrat Leader Al Lawson, and Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair J.D. Alexander to talk about Florida's application for \$2.5 billion to build high-speed rail in Florida.



The money is available through the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Florida has a great opportunity to be a national model for high-speed rail, as long as we demonstrate a commitment to SunRail and other local commuter rail programs before the end of the year.

Frankly, shame on us if we don't take advantage of this historic

opportunity. The Federal government is ready to invest billions of dollars. Building commuter and high-speed rail lines will create thousands of jobs in Florida; it will stimulate our economy; and it will mean transformative change for our metropolitan areas.

[Click here to see my comments.](#)

Federal Government Should Pay for Mistake

Last Thursday in the Senate's Special Committee on Aging, I called on the Federal government to keep its commitment to 6,000 Floridians who are enrolled in a government-created long-term care insurance program. When the program was established, the government offered enrollees a locked-in insurance premium if they agreed to pay a higher premium. Despite this commitment, the government announced this summer it will now need to increase premiums by as much as 25 percent.

[Click here if you'd like to see my questioning of the program managers.](#)

Florida Port Projects Funded; Everglades Restoration Shortchanged

Last week I voted to approve a bill bringing millions of dollars to Florida for energy and water projects, including Everglades restoration. This is essential for maintaining Florida's ports, restoring our Everglades, and funding other projects critical to our economy and quality of life.

Included is \$180 million for Everglades restoration. While this will help ongoing efforts, it doesn't meet the Federal government's commitment. This represents a \$34 million dollar cut for ongoing restoration of the Indian River Lagoon and the Site 1 Impoundment projects. These cuts are a setback to restoration efforts and I will continue to pursue other options for increasing funding in future bills.

Thank you for taking the time to review some of the happenings in Washington. If there's something you would like to see discussed, [please send me a note](#).

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